

Controlling Pool Behavior Jack Marsh 7-17-21

For behavior around the pool, remember the following:

- To lower arousal when you first let him out the back door, proactively say his name and then do a "Search!" (or whichever cue you choose to use) food scatter as you exit the back door.
- Sniffing and searching for food scattered on the ground ([or in the grass!](#)) lowers arousal levels and calms a dog. As such, it can be a valuable way of reducing arousal levels and giving Jack something to think about and do in the yard other than obsessing over the pool.
- Make the yard more enriching by using food scatters, food puzzle toys, chew items like bully sticks, and other interesting things scattered throughout the yard while the pool gate is open. The goal is to make doing *other* natural and calming behaviors in the yard more reinforcing, so the *only* "fun" thing for Jack isn't just the pool.
- Avoid fetch games in the pool. Have a clear cue to start ("Let's Play!" and end "All Done" games of fetch, and initiate these games when Jack is calm and exhibiting desirable behavior, not pushing you to try to start up a game.
- Use "discreet treating" to reinforce Jack for settling, or at least for choosing an activity other than things involving the pool (food from "dog trainer in the sky!")
- You can also keep a leash or long line dragging on Jack when he is outside and being supervised, to allow you to pick up the line and prevent access to the pool at undesirable moments. You can also practice holding or standing on the leash and letting Jack look at the pool (or the kids playing in the pool), and mark "Yes!" and feed him several treats when he shows some impulse control and turns away from the pool, just as we practiced next to Jeanne's pool.